

president of the Baptist Ministers Conference of Baltimore and Vicinity, an organization which represents some 250,000 congregants.

Outside of serving the Lord and leading souls to His kingdom, Pastor Vaughn's greatest joy comes from his family. He has been blessed with 44 years of blissful marriage to his wife, Lillian. They have three children, Corrogon Vaughn, Lynnette Vaughn, and Cassandra Vaughn-Fox; a son-in-law, Larry Fox, Jr.; and three wonderful grandchildren.

Whenever I see Pastor Vaughn in the community, his grandchildren are not far behind. No matter what his daily commitments may be, he picks them up from school every day and spends quality time with them, sharing his wisdom and his love.

Baltimore is truly blessed to be able to call a stalwart such as Dr. Alfred C.D. Vaughn one of our very own. As a son of two preachers, I can say with certainty that it is fitting to give God praise for this dynamic leader. For 50 years he has preached the Gospel with truth and honor, not to glorify himself but to save souls and make others' lives better. He is the kind of man who, just by his presence, makes us want to stand taller and reach for the very best that is within us. As my father once said, he is a man whose presence is presence enough.

I am honored that God allowed our lives to eclipse. And today I thank Pastor Vaughn on behalf of Baltimore and our entire Nation for his dedication, commitment to God and his church and his community.

THE FIRST AMENDMENT—RELIGION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, the first amendment is first in our Bill of Rights because the provisions in it are the most important. Without those provisions the rest of the Bill of Rights are meaningless.

The first amendment states in part that "Congress," that's us, "shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof."

This amendment, like many others, was a reaction to colonial life under King George III. The Church of England was the official Church of England and some of the colonies. The Framers hoped to protect the exercise of any religion by prohibiting the establishment of a national religion. A national religion like the Church of England was supported by taxation. Attendance at services was even mandatory. No marriage or baptism outside of the Church was sanctioned. There were civil and even criminal penalties for members of religious minorities.

So the U.S. Constitution's framework made it possible for all religious groups

to gain legal protection. The freedom to practice one's own religion is the reason why the colonists settled and founded this great country. That is the primary reason why people left England, to seek religious freedom.

The Founding Fathers did not believe that government and religion had to be entirely separate, however. The first President, George Washington, said in his first inaugural address, declared as his "first official act" his "fervent supplications to that Almighty Being who rules over the universe" and that this Almighty Being "might bless this new government."

President Washington also echoed this religious attitude in his farewell address in 1796 when he said, "Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports."

When our Constitution was drafted, the elderly statesman Benjamin Franklin said that if the Good Lord is concerned about a sparrow that falls from the trees, He certainly would be concerned about a new Nation at its birth, and he encouraged Congress to go in prayer. And Congress did so that morning and prayed, and ever since then our Congress starts each morning with a prayer.

The first Congress recognized the importance of religion in government when it enacted the Northwest Ordinance in 1787, and it begins: "Religion, morality, and knowledge being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged."

The first amendment includes the free exercise clause. Like the establishment clause, the framers included the free exercise clause to protect religious minorities from persecution. The establishment clause prohibits government creation of, support, or endorsement of a national religion. And the free exercise clause protects individual religious beliefs and practices from government interference.

The significance of the free exercise of religion clause is that it affirms the value of religion in American culture and even promotes public display of religion.

Many Americans believe that the first amendment created a separation between church and state, but those words do not exist anywhere in the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, nor the Declaration of Independence.

These words came from a letter written by Thomas Jefferson in 1801 to the Danbury Baptist Association, who was concerned about the Congregationalist Church becoming the national religion, and that is why Jefferson made the comment to the Danbury Baptist Association that there is a separation between church and state. These words do not promote a prohibition by government against religion in the public sector.

Billy Graham once said that "The Framers of our Constitution meant we

were to have freedom of religion, not freedom from religion." But antireligious radicals are on the offensive, trying to make the United States free from religion. These radicals want the United States to be a secular government like France. But that's not what our Founding Fathers intended when they created our country.

When Thomas Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence, he proclaimed that God gives us all of our rights. He wrote that "all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights."

Jefferson's reference to God is echoed throughout this Nation. Our currency mentions God. Our government buildings have religious scenes and words etched into them. We pledge allegiance to the Nation under God. We even have the great lawgiver Moses on the far wall looking directly down on the Speaker's chair.

So, Mr. Speaker, the mention of God in our culture is not an establishment of religion. It's a fact that this Nation was founded on religious beliefs and religious values. That is an historical fact.

And that's just the way it is.

□ 1630

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CLAY). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. WOOLSEY addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

PAULETTE MARIE McFARLAND

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATSON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, we have lost Paulette Marie McFarland, 58, who was a trailblazer, an innovator in early childhood development, dying of pancreatic cancer on Tuesday, October 23, 2007, at her home in Chatsworth, California.

She was born Paulette Marie Mahan in Bluefield, West Virginia, on August 12, 1949. She received her bachelor's in early childhood education from Hampton University in Newport News, Virginia, and her master's in education from Mount St. Mary's College in Los Angeles, California.

Paulette taught in the Los Angeles Unified School System for 30 years and spent the majority of her tenure at Van Nuys Elementary. She received many accolades during her career, which included Teacher of the Year for her school region. Paulette served as a Master Teacher for student teachers for Cal State University, Northridge and University of California, Los Angeles. She participated in the Bilingual Teacher Classroom Program and reviewed the latest research in education